

Message Text

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USMISSION NATO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 2262

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GR, CY, TU, US
SUB: PRIME MINISTER COMPLETES BRIEFINGS OF OPPOSITION LEADERS
ON THE AEGEAN AND CYPRUS ISSUES

REF: ATHENS 2165

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. ON MARCH 10 PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS MET SEPARATELY WITH
OPPOSITION LEADERS GEORGE MAVROS, PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF THE
DEMOCRATIC CENTER (UDC), AND ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, PRESIDENT OF THE
PANHELLENIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (PASOK), AND COMPLETED HIS BRIEF-
INGS OF THE OPPOSITION ON THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN ISSUES, AS WELL
AS OTHER DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. FOLLOWING THEIR
RESPECTIVE MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, MAVROS ISSUED A
STATEMENT AND PAPANDREOU MET WITH THE POLITICAL EDITORS OF THE
ATHENS PRESS. THEIR REMARKS ARE ONE OF THE MAIN STORIES IN MOST
NEWSPAPERS TODAY (MARCH 11).

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2. IN HIS STATEMENT, MAVROS SAID NOTHING NEW HAD COME OUT OF HIS
MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND BOTH THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN
ISSUES REMAINED DEADLOCKED OR, AS HE SAID THE PRIME MINISTER PRE-
FERRED TO DESCRIBE IT, AT A STANDSTILL. MAVROS THEN REAFFIRMED THE
UDC'S POSITION ON THESE TWO PROBLEMS--A SETTLEMENT ON CYPRUS MUST
BE IN ACCORD WITH UN RESOLUTIONS AND THE AEGEAN PROBLEMS MUST
BE SETTLED ON THE BASIS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW (EXISTING TREATIES

AND PRACTICES). IN THIS RESPECT GREEK POLICY, HE SAID, SHOULD BE UNYIELDING BECAUSE IT IS A QUESTION OF GREECE'S SOVEREIGN RIGHTS CONCERNING WHICH THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE. MAVROS REITERATED HIS CALL FOR DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES IN THE PARLIAMENT WHICH, HE SAID, WOULD STRENGTHEN THE GREEK POSITION.

3. IN HIS MEETING WITH THE POLITICAL EDITORS PAPANDREAOU SAID HE DISAGREED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION AS BEING AT A "STANDSTILL" AND AGREED INSTEAD WITH THE MAVROS CHARACTERIZATION OF DEVELOPMENTS AS BEING AT A "DEADLOCK". HE ALSO OPPOSED THE GOG'S REFUSAL TO DISCUSS THESE TOPICS IN PARLIAMENT ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PRIME MINISTER PROMISED TO BRIEF THE PARLIAMENT AS SOON AS SOMETHING NEW DEVELOPED. PAPANDREAOU INDICATED THAT HE HAD REITERATED TO THE PRIME MINISTER PASOK'S CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF BOTH THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN ISSUES, SAYING THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE THE WRONG TACTIC. ONLY IF TURKEY RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN BASIC GREEK POSITIONS WHICH, IF VIOLATED, WILL LEAD TO A STRONG RESPONSE, WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE ASSURANCES THERE WILL BE PEACE. IN CONNECTION WITH THE DISCUSSION ABOUT RELATIONS WITH TURKEY, PAPANDREAOU SAID HE HAD POINTED OUT TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT PASOK VIEWED THE CLIFFORD VISIT AS AN INITIAL STEP IN FURTHERING U.S. OBJECTIVES IN THE AREA.

4. PAPANDREAOU INDICATED THAT IN HIS MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THEY HAD ALSO DISCUSSED OTHER MATTERS AS WELL. HE HAD REFERRED, HE SAID, TO PRESSORIES THAT FRANCE WAS TAKING A HARDER POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND CLAIMED THESE REPORTS INDICATED THAT PROBLEMS HAD ARISEN OVER GREECE'S ENTRY. THE PRIME MINISTER, HE ACKNOWLEDGED, CONFIDENTIAL

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DID NOT SHARE THIS VIEW.

5. THE GOG DID NOT ISSUE ANY ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE OR AFTER THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETINGS WITH MAVROS AND PAPANDREAOU. SUBSEQUENTLY, HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO THE REMARKS BY THE TWO OPPOSITION LEADERS ABOUT THEIR MEETINGS WITH CARAMANLIS, A GOVERNMENT SOURCE COMMENTED THAT "THE OPPOSITION USES EVEN RESPONSIBLE INFORMATION IT IS GIVEN ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ISSUES AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO STATE ITS VIEWS UNILATERALLY, ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY REFUTED THEM."
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6. COMMENT: COMMENTS WE HAVE BEEN HEARING FROM OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS AND FROM GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE PRETTY MUCH IN AGREEMENT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN ISSUES, ACCORDING TO MAVROS AND PAPANDREAOU, AS BEING AT A STANDSTILL. EVERYBODY HERE IS WAITING, OF COURSE, FOR THE MARCH 31 INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS ON CYPRUS IN VIENNA.

THERE IS NO GREAT OPTIMISM, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WILL MAKE MUCH PROGRESS. GREEKS THINK EVERYTHING WILL DEPEND ON TURKISH GOOD FAITH AND THEY POINT TO RECENT STATEMENTS BY DENKTASH AS GIVING LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT IN THIS RESPECT.

7. ACCORDING TO MFA SOURCES, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS, THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVEMENT ON THE AEGEAN ISSUES SINCE THE MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS IN STRASBOURG AND THE CONTINENTAL SHELF TALKS IN LONDON. NO DATE HAS BEEN SET AS YET FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF SHELF TALKS WHICH ARE SUPPOSED TO RESUME IN PARIS THIS MONTH, TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO GREECE TEZEL HAS YET TO DELIVER A TURKISH COUNTERPROPOSAL ON THE AIR SPACE QUESTION AS PROMISED IN STRASBOURG, ACCORDING TO THE GREEKS.

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